

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

E-mail: kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org

Website: www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened,”

—Romans 1:21

**Servants during Nov and Dec:**

Songleader: Larry (11/24), Dwight (12/1), Stanley (12/8), Larry (12/15), Dwight (12/22), Stanley (12/29)

Reading: Larry; Stanley (Dec)

Announcements: Marty; Larry (Dec)

Table: Marty, Stanley, Larry; Mike M, Marty, Stanley (Dec)

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (11/27), Larry (12/4), Stanley (12/11), Kris (12/18), Larry (12/25)

Area Meetings:

Eastside, Each Sunday Dec @ 3, various;
Phil Campbell, 12/1,2,3,5, Michael Morrow

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road
 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

Volume 7

November 24, 2024

Number 25

It's Thanksgiving Time!

By Dudley Ross Spears

In November this nation pauses to observe one of its long-standing holidays called “Thanksgiving.” It is a national day that is devoted to giving God thanks for all that He has done for mankind and serves as a memorial of that first Thanksgiving observed by the Pilgrims who first settled on this continent to form our nation. Giving of thanks to God is a thing that should be done 365 days a year rather than on just one special day, but that seems to be one of our greatest shortcomings in this nation.

The duty to be grateful is impressed on us throughout the Bible. One of the things that condemned Gentile nations listed by Paul was, they did not “give thanks,” Rom 1:21. He shows that people who knew God were not thankful. This indicates that anyone with knowledge of God should be thankful by the very nature of that knowledge. To know that God has been mindful of man in so many ways should almost automatically evoke a responsive gratitude from man. Almighty God has done some wonderful things for man for which man should be grateful. Let us look at a few of them.

God has blessed the whole world in many physical ways. Jesus said of the Father, “...He causes His sun to rise on the evil and

the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous,” Mt 5:45. Even to those who make no pretense of serving God, He extends His goodness and love. Paul once preached to a heathen people in the region around Lycaonia and the ancient cities of Lystra and Derbe. Listen to part of what he said. “We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness,” Acts 14:15-17.

It is the plain truth that were it not for Almighty God and His love, care and concern for this world, we would not exist. At the ancient city of Athens, Paul preached to the grandest thinkers of the day and in his description of God, he says, “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things,” Acts 17:24,25.

Even the ancient poets and men of scholarly circles knew God and His goodness. Again, Paul says, “for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children,’” Acts 17:28. God is the life principle of this world. His power and love are blended together so as to make our existence possible on this world and we; his offspring, should be deeply grateful. David said, “Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast,” Psa 36:6. Then also in the next few verses, David adds, “For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light,” v9.

God has blessed mankind with spiritual blessings. Paul praised the Father because He “...has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” Eph 1:3. How can we understand the fact that God has offered spiritual deliverance to all men? Man, a rebellious ungrateful offspring, that deserves to be destroyed, is offered salvation. God sent His son to make this deliverance possible and men killed the son in utter rejection. Perhaps, if we understand any part of this great love, we can understand how that this salvation is by His immeasurable grace, Eph 2:8. This grace came in the form of Jesus Christ. “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,” Titus 2:11. John says, “...the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ,” Jn 1:17. And the Hebrew writer says, “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone,” Heb 2:9.

But what is involved in thanking God for all His wonderful blessings? Is it merely observing one day a year by getting together with family and neighbors, eating turkey, watching a football game and having fun?

Thanksgiving should be much more than this. Our actions will speak far louder than our words. What we do is far more of an indication to God than what we say. Someone has said, “Thanks-living is of more value than thanks-saying.” Thanksgiving is thanks-living.

David, the sweet singer of Israel, once wrote, “What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation And call upon the name of the LORD. I shall pay my vows to the LORD, Oh may it be in the presence of all His people,” Psa 116:12-14. If people are really thankful, the first thing to be done to manifest it is to take the cup of salvation so graciously offered by God. This is a figure of speech filled with great beauty. A man is dying of thirst. He has no interest in water till now. Suddenly, when he realizes that his life is in grave danger, he sees a man holding forth a cup of cold, clear water. How eagerly would he accept it?

God holds forth the cup of salvation to dying humanity because of his love and grace. Yet men who breathe borrowed air, and eat food God provides for them, and enjoy strength only loaned to them by their maker ignore much that God holds forth. The greatest gift of all is often ignored and rejected by those who will take off from work on “Thanksgiving Day” to gorge themselves on turkey and cranberries, but never give a second fleeting thought to the God who made it all possible for them.

This cup of salvation must be accepted on God’s terms which are very simple. The terms of salvation are faith and obedience. The Hebrew writer said, “...without faith it is impossible to please Him,” Heb 11:6. Obedience is the proof of faith. To obey means to comply with orders and God’s orders are in the gospel. Failure to obey the gospel means eternal ruin, 2 Thess 1:7-9. Specifically the orders we must obey are, faith (Jn 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30) and baptism (Acts 2:38). If the cup of salvation is

ever received by the sinner in need of God’s grace, it must be through these steps.


God has never appointed salvation to be obtained by the, “receive Christ into your heart and give your life to him,” theory. Nor can salvation be enjoyed by “an experience of grace,” “a miracle of regeneration.” or some kind of “decision for Christ.” Salvation does not come in the “better felt than told experiences” which millions rely on. We do not take God’s cup in our own way. Some have deceived themselves (or have been deceived by false teachers) into thinking that they have been drinking deep from the cup of His salvation. If we take God’s cup of salvation it must be done in God’s way—not our own. People who really are thankful to God, will, in the words of David, say, “What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD,” and they will obey God in all things.

Many cups will be offered to us in life as we pass along this journey toward death. We may for the moment be dazzled by their apparent beauty and allurements. For example, there is the cup of pleasure, from which myriads of people today drink. America is called a “pleasure-mad-society.” More money is spent on pleasure in this nation than is spent for medicine and education. We spend more on pleasure than we do for national defense. I will not embarrass the name of religion to compare the amount spent on it to that which is spent on pleasure. How tragic it is that more people will attend a football game on Thanksgiving day than will worship God the following Lord’s Day. How tragic that more will drink from the cup of pleasure than will drink from

the cup of salvation.

There is the cup of worldly aims and ambitions that is offered to us in life. Many drink from it daily. People get so busy making a living, a name and a business that they never find time to take the cup of salvation. They are like the foolish man, of whom Jesus spoke, in the 12th chapter of Luke. He had such success in farming that he thought it necessary to revise his entire operation. He was going to tear down his barns and build larger ones, but he forgot one thing—God was ready to take him from this life and he was not ready to leave. What will we leave behind when God, in His own good time, gets ready to take us? Many, like this fool, will be drinking from the cup of this worldly ambition and lose their soul.

There is a test we should make and then take a cup that is offered to us. An old legend has it that once a king was poisoned by a cup that one of his aides put in his hand. From then on, all who followed in his lineage would name the name of the Lord over the cup and if it contained poison, it would tremble in their grasp. Now that is only a legend, but we could determine our best opportunity in life by naming the name of the Lord over all the opportunities we meet. Ambitions and amusements have their place, but that which best fits the name of the Lord is the salvation of the soul. Will you call on His name today and be saved? Will you make the Lord’s cause and purposes your chief aim in this life?

There is no other way to demonstrate true thanksgiving than to serve God faithfully and constantly. May God help all who read these words to truly be thankful and devoted to the God who made us. 

Remember in Prayer

Mark Horton is still dealing with prostate cancer; **Donise** broke a tooth, so it was removed; **Barbara’s** brother passed away last week; **Stanley** is having some difficulty with

diabetes meds. Please pray also for **Betty; Carolyn; Hazel; Joshua V; Marie; Mike B; Faye;** and **the Pollard Family.** 